

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 07199 242117Z
ACTION NODS-00

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O 242039Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8404
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 7199

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MOPS, MILI, IS, LE, US, PLO
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 7195, (B) BEIRUT 4724

1. DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN TELEPHONED ME AT 2020 HOURS LOCAL FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN JERUSALEM. HE SAID THE CABINET DEFENSE COMMITTEE HAD JUST FINISHED ITS DELIBERATIONS AND HAD AGREED TO A WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON COMMENCING TOMORROW MORNING, SUNDAY, SEPT 25. THE WITHDRAWAL IS TO BE COMPLETED NO LATER THAN 1000 HOURS LOCAL. WEIZMAN SAID IF WE CAN OBTAIN A GOL ACCEPTANCE TO THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL (SEE PARA 3 BELOW) TONIGHT, HE CAN HAVE ALL HIS FORCES OUT BY 0800 TO 0900 HOURS LOCAL. HE THEN HAD HIS AIDE READ TO ME THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT AGREED TO BY THE CABINET DEFENSE COMMITTEE:

2. QUOTE THE PRIME MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGES RECEIPT OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER DATED 24 SEPTEMBER, 1977 AND WILL RESPOND TO IT IN DETAIL WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

"THE LETTER WAS HANDED TO THE PRIME MINISTER BY
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CHARGE' D'AFFAIRES VIETS ON SATURDAY AT 10:00 AM. AT 1900 HOURS AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE MINISTERIAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE WAS CONVENED IN ORDER TO TAKE A DECISION. AROUND 1600, MR. VIETS HAD BEEN KIND ENOUGH TO CALL THE PRIME MINISTER AND COMMUNICATE TO HIM THE LATEST MESSAGE FROM BEIRUT CONTAINING THE PROPOSALS OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

"THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL, TOOK THE FOLLOWING DECISION:

"A. WE RELY ON THE PRESIDENT'S PROMISE CONTAINED IN HIS PERSONAL LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE EFFECT: 'WE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE FORCEFUL AND INTENSIVE EFFORTS WITH THE LEBANESE AND THE SYRIANS TO ASSURE THAT PALESTIAN FORCES IN THE SOUTH IMMEDIATELY AGREE TO AND COOPERATE WITH THE CEASEFIRE (AND) NOT TAKE MILITARY ADVANTAGE OF THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.'

"WE ACCEPT THE PROPOSALS OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO THE EFFECT:

"I. THE CEASEFIRE WILL COME INTO EFFECT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM SOUTH LEBANON.

"II. NO ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO CHANGE THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND.

"III. THERE WILL BE NO MORE ATTACKS ON ISRAELI TERRITORY FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY.

"IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE ABOVE, INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY TO BE COMPLETED AROUND 10:00 SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1977.

"WE EXPECT AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ACCEPTANCE BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

"WITH THE ENTRY INTO EFFECT OF THE CEASEFIRE, NEGOTIATIONS WILL START ON A PERMANENT ARRANGEMENT TO
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ESTABLISH PEACEFUL CONDITIONS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND ON THE NORTHERN BORDER OF ISRAEL.

"WE SHALL STAND BY OUR DEMAND THAT ALL PLO UNITS WITHDRAW TO THE NORTH OF THE LITANI RIVER. UNQUOTE

3. WEIZMAN THEN CAME BACK ON THE PHONE. I ASKED HIM IF THE FINAL SENTENCE OF THE CABINET STATEMENT WAS CONDITIONAL TO THE CEASEFIRE. HE REPLIED ABSOLUTELY NOT. IT WAS MERELY A STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF GOI POLICY AND IN NO WAY WAS LINKED TO THE CEASEFIRE. THE GOL DID NOT RPT NOT NEED TO AGREE TO IT (OR EVEN KNOW OF IT) PRIOR TO THE CEASEFIRE.

4. I ASKED FOR RE-CONFIRMATION THAT THERE WILL BE NO PUBLICITY CONCERNING ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CEASE-FIRE. HE SAID THERE WILL BE NO ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE GOI.

5. PER VELIOTES TELECON REQUEST, I RAISED SUBJECT OF PLIGHT OF AMERICAN AND FRENCH UN OBSERVERS UNDER SIEGE AT UN OUTPOST NEAR KHIAM. WEIZMAN SAID HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY ORDER NORTHERN AREA COMMANDER TO HAVE ARTILLERY FIRE IN THAT VICINITY SUBSTANTIALLY

REDUCED AND THAT SIMILAR REQUEST WOULD BE PASSED TO CHRISTIAN FORCES. HE ASKED THAT WE INFORM THE UN IN NEW YORK NOT TO WORRY, THAT IF ALL WENT WELL HE PROMISED THE TWO MEN A SWIM IN LAKE TIBERIAS BY TOMORROW AFTERNOON.

6. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN THEN CAME ON THE PHONE TO EXPRESS HIS PERSONAL GRATITUDE FOR OUR ASSISTANCE IN ARRANGING THE CEASEFIRE. HE SAID HE WOULD BE "ETERNALLY GRATEFUL FOR THE EFFORTS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT" IN ITS EFFORTS TO BRING TRANQUILITY TO THIS REGION OF THE WORLD. HE ASKED THAT THE PRESIDENT BE INFORMED HE WOULD BE RESPONDING TO HIS LETTER IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. MEANWHILE, HE WISHED TO THANK SECRETARY VANCE FOR CONVEYING
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TO THE PRESIDENT HIS MESSAGE CONTAINED IN TEL AVIV 7195

7. WEIZMAN RETURNED TO THE PHONE AND ASKED ME TO CALL HIM AS SOON AS WE RECEIVE ANY WORD FROM BEIRUT RELATIVE TO LEBANESE ACCEPTANCE. HE REITERATED HIS HOPE THAT WE COULD HAVE WORD EARLY TONIGHT SO THAT WITHDRAWAL OPERATIONS COULD MOVE AHEAD WITHOUT DELAY.
VIETS

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